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EIC SUBCOMMITTEE ON REQUIREMENTS AND FACILITIES FOR COLLATION

Proposal for the Handling of Foreign Language Documents

I. THE PROBLEM

The Subcommittee on Requirements and Facilities for Collation of the Economic Intelligence Committee, through its Working Group on Foreign Language Documents, has made a careful study to determine and recommend the treatment, operations, procedures and end product which will make foreign language documents of maximum value to analysts engaged in economic intelligence research. In the pursuit of this task the Subcommittee has made every effort to base its recommendations on a determination and definition of the type of operation or service which economic research analysts find most valuable in their work. It has been recognized that present facilities for accomplishing this purpose have not been altogether satisfactory.

In dealing with the problem, it became immediately apparent that the line of demarcation in the utilization of foreign documents for economic intelligence research and other intelligence research activities should not be defined, inasmuch as the procedure for the utilization of foreign documents for intelligence purposes, whether economic, military, political, or any other purpose, is fundamentally the same. The Subcommittee, therefore, feels that its recommendations and discussion may be applied to all fields of intelligence document utilization with a minimum amount of modification.

1. The present procurement activities of the several economic intelligence agencies are generally uncoordinated and often result in wasteful competition with each other.

2. Not all acquired materials are adequately identified, cataloged, distributed or stored in a regular manner, and no one knows what economic intelligence materials are or are not available in Washington or in the private libraries of the country.

3. Secondary economic intelligence sources are often translated to the neglect of basic primary sources, and the translations are, in certain cases, unnecessarily duplicative. Lack of specific subject competence on the part of translators sometimes results in inadequate translations and failure to meet completely the requirements of intelligence end-users.

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4. Critical gaps in our economic intelligence data can often be filled, as it has been demonstrated, by a well-directed and expanded translation service made responsible to the requirements of the end-user. In some areas of research a serious shortcoming has been the failure to provide for the systematic translation of such basic economic intelligence materials as laws, regulations, major doctrinal materials, policy statements, encyclopedias, statistical compilations, and similar reference and research tools. In other areas basic economic research translation programs have been initiated without reference to the intelligence responsibilities and activities of the other IAC agencies with resulting waste of money, effort and resources.

5. Although timeliness is of the utmost importance in the case of current material, present facilities do not provide timely flow of current economic information available from overt sources, thus detracting from the value of the service rendered by existing translating bodies.

6. Moreover, despite the critical shortage of translators in several languages of the areas in which our economic intelligence responsibilities are increasing and will continue to increase, little attention has been paid by those primarily responsible for the production of economic intelligence to the problem of recruiting and training translators, either in terms of the specific task of translating for economic intelligence purposes or in terms of meeting estimated future needs.

There is no one place among the IAC agencies where these and related problems can be jointly presented and where jointly planned, integrated, and coordinated solutions can be formulated. The Subcommittee, therefore, construes that its duty is to present to the EIC a general plan for the establishment of facilities which can adequately answer the requirements of the economic intelligence analyst. The Subcommittee has borne in mind at all times the present facilities for handling the various stages of procuring and processing documents of information value for the production of economic intelligence without attempting to reconsider these facilities or to criticize the organic or functional processes which they perform.

II. DISCUSSION

The ultimate goal of a system designed to utilize foreign language documents for economic intelligence is the timely presentation to the economic analyst of information contained in foreign documents which can be used in the production of economic intelligence. This timely presentation of such information depends upon several distinct operations. These operations do not necessarily follow the sequence outlined below and not all are equally vital to all areas of intelligence research. However, the Subcommittee believes that those language services are generally of common concern to all economic intelligence analysts and, therefore, are needed for the optimum utilization of foreign documents for economic intelligence purposes.

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1. Procurement: At present the major collection activity is maintained by the Department of State through the facilities of Foreign Service posts throughout the world. In addition to the regular full-time Publication Procurement Officers, there are ad hoc Publication Procurement Officers abroad who, because of their peculiar backgrounds, are well-suited to procure materials of technical interest. The various attaches representing other departments of the Government also act as procurement officers for their own functions. Although there is a commendable collaboration between the service attaches and Publication Procurement Officers, it is believed that such collaboration between the attaches and Publication Procurement Officers could be extended and improved.

2. Cataloging: The availability of a document should be made known to all who may have an interest in its subject matter. A periodic accessions list (by transliterated and translated title), prepared by a central office for documents procured by or for any member of the intelligence community or any other Governmental or private organizations should be issued without jeopardizing the current intelligence value of the material. An accessions list of foreign language documents which would be of maximum value to the economic intelligence analyst would necessarily have to have a brief descriptive note indicating, for each document, a preliminary estimate of its scope and quality, and its potential intelligence value.

3. Utilization of Basic Materials

a. Abstracting: Selected documents should be abstracted in accordance with specified intelligence research needs as determined jointly by the intelligence producing agencies. These abstracts or summaries in English would then be distributed to each interested IAC agency. When an abstract or summary reaches the analyst and he determines a further interest in the document, he may contact the abstracting service directly. The analyst and the abstracting service would jointly review the document to ascertain what additional information needs can be met from the document and in what form this information can best be supplied - that is, oral statement by the linguist, supplementary abstract, brief summary, or partial or complete translation. This procedure will obviate the time-consuming translating (verbatim translation) activity which often results when translations are initiated blindly without knowledge of the contents or without specific reference to particular intelligence problems.

b. Translation: If partial or complete translation of a document is deemed advisable, the document would be referred to a translation unit. This unit should be so organized as to meet needs arising from the above described process and also to be responsive to requests initiated by the IAC agencies both individually and collectively. This unit would be staffed by linguists having a high degree of appropriate special qualification - that is, technical and/or geographic as well as linguistic competency. In order to avoid undue duplication of effort, the translation unit should be kept conversant with all translations of economic intelligence value which have been produced or being produced by other translation activities both governmental and private.

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c. Special Annotated Bibliographies: Because of the necessity, at the initiation of extensive research projects, for a critical survey of the scope of economic information presently available, provision should be made for the preparation of special annotated bibliographies on the request of the analyst. The purpose of such bibliographies would be to bring together the primary source materials bearing on one subject, to organize the titles according to subject subdivision, to describe the contents of individual titles, and to make a critical judgment as to the value of each title. The preparation of such bibliographies requires a high level of judgment and discernment exceeding the level of competence which is normally adequate for routine library and cataloging functions.

4. Utilization of Current Materials: Of particular importance in connection with current economic intelligence activities is the extraction in part or in full of relevant information from newspapers, periodicals, and other sources pertaining to current conditions in foreign areas or information not available in basic sources. This desirable activity now exists and should be continued. However, measures should be taken to make this service more profitable and timely and more directly responsive to specific needs of the IAC agencies. For example, the more complete utilization of the provincial press from some areas is desirable. It is further desirable that this activity be correlated with other press monitoring and translating activities to avoid duplication of effort.

5. Digests: One of the most important research tools which should be made available to the analyst is the systematic digest of widely dispersed foreign language materials dealing with specific topics in the field of economic intelligence. Such digests should be comprehensive, detailed, and should be systematically organized to meet the need for which they are undertaken. These digests, furthermore, should be presented in such form that the purpose of foreign writer is clear to the reader. Editorial comment should be identified as such.

6. Indexing and Storage: After a document has been cataloged and annotated, scanned, abstracted, and/or translated, consideration must be given to future need for this document. There is no such thing as over-indexing; there is only a practical limit to indexing. It must be possible to recall a document with a minimum of effort or to identify and locate all available documentation on a given subject or area. An indexing process should be created which accomplishes these purposes. The consideration of installing an indexing system for foreign language documents must necessarily be done with the collaboration of the existing facilities for this type of activity.

Space requirements for the storage of materials having potential future economic intelligence value presents a serious problem. It is the belief of the Subcommittee that much of the storage problem of a central library can be alleviated by the maintenance of complete microfilm files of all pertinent foreign language documents. Such a file should also make possible the recalling of any document for reproduction or rescanning in terms of new requirements at any time. From the master film, additional prints of unique documents could be made available to all interested agencies while still preserving a central microfilm library.

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7. Conclusions: The Subcommittee believes that the operations described above, if carried out competently and with careful guidance by the IAC agencies, will make foreign-language documents of maximum value to analysts engaged in economic and other intelligence research. The Subcommittee further believes that these operations should be carried on without prejudice to, and in correlation with, activities of a similar nature which may be performed in IAC agencies to meet needs which are peculiar to an individual agency. Optimum utilization of foreign language materials will clearly require both additional planning and more effective and coordinated employment of existing facilities in the intelligence community. From its examination of the problem the Subcommittee concludes that the major portion of the operations necessary for such optimum utilization can best be performed by the Central Intelligence Agency as a common service to the intelligence agencies. An indispensable element in making such operations effective is provision of a mechanism which will provide guidance to such common service, coordinate the efforts of CIA with those carried on by other IAC agencies, maintain the highest level of competency in the working staff performing such common service, and represent the views of the intelligence community in connection with similar activities of other Governmental agencies and private organizations.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS.

Under the provisions of the National Security Act, Section 102 (d), the Central Intelligence Agency is charged with responsibility for performing for the benefit of the existing intelligence agencies such services of common concern as the National Security Council determines can be more efficiently accomplished centrally. The Subcommittee recommends:

1. That the Central Intelligence Agency be directed to establish an organization to perform as a service of common concern, activities pertaining to the collection, utilization, and storage of foreign language documents of economic intelligence value for the benefit of the entire intelligence community which are not in conflict with existing regulations and which are not at present being performed by other intelligence agencies.

2. *That such an organization consists of:*

a. A bibliographic service, whose activities should include

(1) Preparation and dissemination of a regular list of foreign language materials of economic intelligence value received by or for intelligence and other agencies and private organizations;

(2) Preparation and dissemination of annotated bibliographies on special economic intelligence topics;

(3) Development of a central catalog of foreign language materials of economic intelligence value, in cooperation, where appropriate, with the Library of Congress and with other Governmental and private libraries;